

DD/S 71-3620

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16 SEP 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Historical Staff

SUBJECT : "On-Going" Historical Program

1. When we met last week you asked that I give you some idea of the Support Directorate's plans for proceeding with the "on-going" Historical Program. Our preoccupation has been with trying to marshal and retain enough interested and competent resources to meet the 31 December deadline for completing the "catching-up" phase. I had hoped that we would be receiving some Agency guidance about continuing the Historical Program after 31 December before being asked to consider plans for an "on-going" program. Frankly, I don't see how we can develop any meaningful or realistic plans without having such guidance.

2. Our experience with the "catching-up" phase where we have been using contract annuitants in limited numbers, people who are about to retire, and a few people who have been assigned to history in addition to their other duties has proven the impracticability of attempting to plan progress in any kind of orderly program under these circumstances. Writing history as an additional duty is simply non-productive. Reliance upon people who are about to retire has proven impractical. If prospective retirees have any significant time remaining with the Agency their assignment to the Historical Program becomes nothing more than a part-time duty. Regardless of how well-intentioned parties interested in such assignments may be, the fact is that people who have the credentials to do a creditable job of research and writing continue to be valuable to their components and they never seem to become completely free to concentrate on history. The number of prospective retirees who may be interested and capable of researching and writing histories is unpredictable even among those who may be made available. Many of the same considerations apply to contract annuitants and this combination does not seem to offer a very solid foundation for planning and building a continuing historical program.

3. We estimate very roughly that a minimum of 26 man-years of professional time has been used since September 1969 in the "catching-up" phase of the Historical Program. Assuming the average professional grade to have been about GS-12, which is probably low, the program would have cost nearly \$400,000. A great deal of motion is lost and time wasted inevitably because the people assigned to the program have never done anything like it before; they are not experienced researchers; they are not practiced writers; their tenure is rarely what it was expected to be when they were given the assignment; continuity is non-existent; a great deal of the research and preliminary work has had to be done over again more than once; and the editorial and rewrite process has been complicated by having more than one author involved in the preparation of a particular history.

4. If we are going to have an on-going historical program presumably it will continue through the life of the Agency. That being the case, the program should be given its proper place in the Agency's priorities and professional resources should be allocated to it accordingly. The program should be established and supported at the Agency level and given overall direction so that it can proceed in some orderly and systematic way. If this does not happen, it is difficult for me to see how we can expect realistically that the program will thrive in the face of the very serious personnel and budgetary constraints confronting all parts of the Agency.

5. The Support Services Historical Officer has suggested that four or five professional historians be assigned responsibility for the on-going historical effort in the Support Services. He suggests that the Offices of Logistics and Personnel each be assigned one full-time officer; that one officer divide his time equally between the Offices of Communications and Security; and that one officer divide his time equally among the Offices of Finance, Medical Services and Training. I cannot conceive that such a number of positions can be made available from any source in the foreseeable future. On the other hand, it would be feckless to attempt to sustain an historical program "in addition to other duties" in competition with the priorities that will remain after the current reductions have been accomplished. Your guidance is requested.

STATINTL

  
Chairman, Support Services Historical Board